

Suburbs take action before wells run dry

By Gerry Smith
TRIBUNE REPORTER

One morning in April 1994, Barbara Wojnicki discovered her toilet wouldn't flush. She tried the kitchen faucet, but it gurgled, dripped, then stopped. When her son tried to take a shower, nothing came out there, either.

Minutes later, several neighbors in her Campton Township subdivision began frantically calling, asking her, "Hey, do you have water?" "Of course, people panicked," Wojnicki said.

Water levels in 22 wells in the Wideview subdivision had dropped so low that pipes could no longer reach them.

Well drillers had to lower pipes so residents could resume activities they once took for granted.

The incident was a wake-up call for the fast-growing semirural community about 40 miles west of Chicago and led to the creation of a cutting-edge computer model that allows officials to determine the impact of future development on the aquifers.

It was also a precursor to the growing regional water concerns that exist today. Last week, a task force approved a plan to ensure the future availability of clean water in northeastern Illinois for decades to come.

The group warned that as the region's population grows — particularly in the collar counties — communities must improve their water conservation and management. If not, demand for water could increase as much as 64 percent by 2050, "creating potentially serious shortages," according to a report commissioned by the Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning.

The new regional water plan emphasizes conservation, pricing and the recycling of water used for waste, dish washing, laundry



In 1994, Barbara Wojnicki's neighborhood temporarily lost access to its water supply.
MIKE BURLEY/PHOTO FOR THE TRIBUNE

and bathing.

Many far west suburbs already have taken action to ensure their wells won't go dry.

Last September, Kane County received a report showing declining water levels in its deep and shallow aquifers and declining flows in streams in the future, according to Paul Schuch, Kane County director of water resources. In response, the county is looking

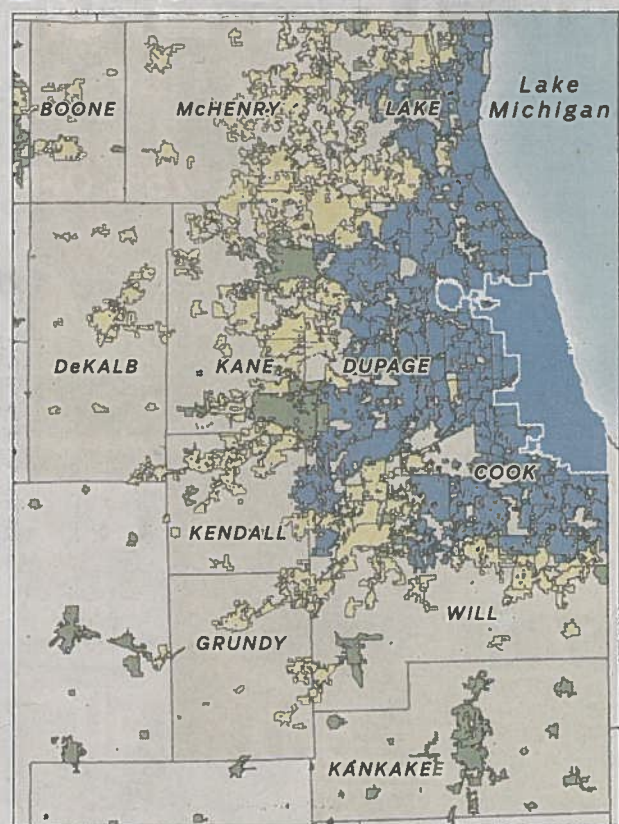
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Region's demand for water projected to rise

By 2050, the Chicago area's demand for public water could increase by 35 percent, according to reports by the Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning. Here is a look at water use in the region.

Source of public water supply in 11-county area

■ = Lake Michigan ■ = Groundwater ■ = Local rivers

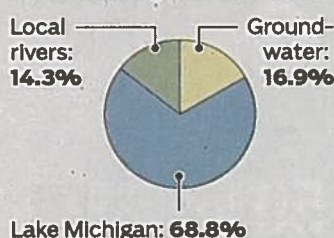


Water withdrawals by county

2005 data, in millions of gallons per day, excluding water for "once-through" power plants

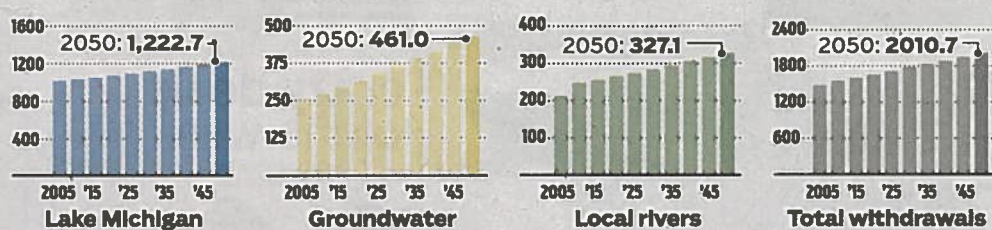
Cook	972.8
Will	150.5
DuPage	101.2
Lake	91.3
Kane	52.5
McHenry	38.8
Kankakee	33.6
DeKalb	13.8
Kendall	9.5
Grundy	9.2
Boone	7.2

Breakdown by water source



Annual public water demand scenarios for 11-county area

Potential demand, in millions of gallons per day, excluding water for "once-through" power plants



SOURCES: Benedykt Dzielinski and F.J. Chowdhury, Southern Illinois University Carbondale, Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning, ESRI

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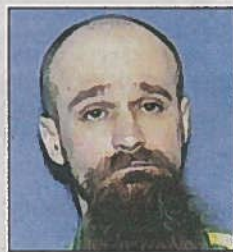
In a Clarendon Hills cemetery, Sharon Weber visits the grave of her husband, Jerry, with sons Erik, 3 months, and David, 2, nine weeks after the 1992 slaying. CHUCK BERMAN/TRIBUNE FILE PHOTO

Trial has echoes of Dugan case

By Art Barnum
TRIBUNE REPORTER

The case sounds eerily familiar: An Aurora man already serving two life sentences for murder faces the possibility of a death sentence in a third.

But this time the defendant is not Brian Dugan, recently sent to death row for killing Jeanine Nicarico, but Edward Tenney, his former county jail pod mate. And while Dugan avoided trial by pleading guilty to the Nicarico crime, Tenney, 50, is preparing to let a jury decide if he killed Jerry Weber, a 24-year-old father of two young boys, on April 17, 1992.



Edward Tenney in an Illinois Department of Corrections photo.

The status of other capital cases in DuPage County. PAGE 4

Jury selection is ongoing and could be completed by the end of this week.

Prosecutors say Tenney was walking along a road looking for aluminum cans when he came upon Weber, who had pulled his van off the side of a road near an abandoned grain elevator to search for flagstones for the family's backyard rock garden. Tenney is accused of firing four shots into the back of Weber's head and taking his wallet and \$6 in cash.

Sharon Weber found her husband's body near Sheffer and Vaughn roads in rural DuPage County, an intersection that no longer exists because of the development of the Stonebridge sub-

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CHICAGOLAND EXTRA

Plan to conserve our liquid assets

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the shower or sink.

It also calls for collaboration among communities to protect shared sources, such as river basins and underground aquifers.

It notes that the average water and sewage bill in Illinois is about \$35.50 per month, while the national average is \$39.67. The report encourages water utilities to evaluate whether the price they charge really reflects the value of water.

"Water pricing is increasingly becoming a tool for managing demand, with certain pricing options carrying more of an incentive for consumers to use water efficiently," the report says.

Studies have shown that in Illinois, increasing the cost of water by 10 percent decreases demand by 1.5 percent, according to the report.

It warns that strict regulations safeguard water from Lake Michigan — which already supplies 77 percent of the region's demand. Although several communities in western Lake County are asking to tap into the lake, the report notes that Illinois is nearing the limit that a Supreme Court decree set in 1967 for lake withdrawals.

So conservation is increasingly important for communities that rely on groundwater, or the Fox and Kankakee rivers, according to the report.

"We've got to become more efficient," said Tim Loftus, program manager at the Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning, which coordinated the study.

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The report looks at water use in Boone, Cook, DeKalb, DuPage, Grundy, Kane, Kankakee, Kendall, Lake, McHenry and Will counties.

About 9 to 10 percent of the region's water comes from deep bedrock aquifers, according to the report. Another 9 to 10 percent of residents use shallow aquifers, and 4 to 5 percent get their water from the Fox and Kankakee rivers.

The report estimates that Cook County's population will grow about 19 percent by 2050, and the demand for water by about 14 percent.

Loftus noted that outlying counties, with the most room to grow, are predicted to see demand increase the most. Kendall County, for example, is expected to see a demand grow by more than 160 percent by 2050, according to the report; Grundy County by about 97 percent; and Will County by nearly 82 percent.

Josh Ellis, a program associate at the Metropolitan Planning Council in Chicago, applauded the new report and its call for conservation. He echoed that outlying counties must be cautious about water use.

He said suggestions in the report about using "gray" water for uses such as irrigation or washing cars will go a long way.

"The problem is not always conservation," he said. "Sometimes it's the water you're using. There's no reason to wash your car with treated drinking water."

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Suburban communities increasingly must evaluate the effects that new subdivisions will have on the water supply, experts said. Housing is set to surge as population booms in the collar counties by mid-century. ZBIGNIEW BZDAK/TRIBUNE PHOTO 2007

Water runs deep — but it can also run out

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at ways to better communicate with individual towns about water management, including possible formal agreements because "adjacent municipalities may begin competing for the same water supply," he said.

In Kane County, where the population is projected to nearly double to 928,000 by 2050, "there's more competition for the water in the aquifers and consequently not enough water to go around," Schuch said.

Some officials are looking for alternative supplies. In Kendall County, the Fox

Deals may be needed between towns because "adjacent municipalities may begin competing for the same water supply."

—Paul Schuch, director of water resources for Kane County, which is expected to nearly double to 928,000 by 2050

River is seen as a potential supplement to deep bedrock aquifers, said Jerry Dudgeon, director of the Kendall County Department of Planning Building and Zoning.

Meanwhile, individual towns have taken measures to promote water conservation. Oswego has instituted ordinances that restrict

when lawns can be watered in summer and prohibit the laying of sod in June, July and August.

Still, with Kendall County's population projected to more than triple to 280,000 by 2050, residents may have to drill deeper into aquifers as water levels decline, said Dudgeon, who

was a member of the task force. But as wells are drilled deeper, energy costs rise, as do mineral concentration and water salinity, he said.

Campton Township officials have a computer modeling system created with the help of the U.S. Geological Survey that can project how much water would be withdrawn and recharged from an aquifer if a parcel of land is developed.

"We want to develop so our resources can support us, but no further," said Campton Township Supervisor John Kupar.

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